Walking and Driving Tour of Dwight

Pioneer Gothic Church- Corner of Franklin and Seminole Street, was built in 1857. This is a fine example of Carpenter Gothic Architecture. Pointed arched windows and doors as well as board and batten frame construction characterize this style. The steeple is 80 feet high. The land for the church was donated by Richard P. Morgan, Jr. The cost of the building was $2650 and became the Presbyterian Church which maintained a congregation until 1890. From 1891-1893 the Keeley Company used the church as a club room.. In Dec of 1893, the Danish Methodist Episcopal Church bought the building for $700. The building was then sold to the Christian Science Society in 1924 and was sold in 1956 to the Calvary Baptist Church who sold it 1964 to Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Jensen. They sold it in 1966 for $6264,given by Charles McWilliams in memory of his uncle Edward, to the Dwight Historical Society. The Historical Society raised $29,000 to completely renovate the building. In order to insure the future of the building, the Historical Society gave the church to Dwight Township to be used as their town hall. On July 1, 1977, James H. Oughton, President of the Society, presented the deed to Clement J. Steichen, township supervisor. The building is used currently by the Historical Society as a meeting place.

Perry House - across the street from the Gothic Church. Built before the turn of the Century. It is currently the Wheel Inn rooming house and owned by Lester Heinrich.

Weese Blacksmith Shop - 100 North Franklin Street. For many years it was the Reeb Monument works. Peter Riccolo, father of the current tenant, Daniel Riccolo, worked here as a stonecutter. The building is currently the Riccolo Monument Shop.

30 people.
8-5 at
4. Sunday

Mickelson Building - 160-162 East Main Street-Built in 1880. This building was purchased in 1938 by Forrest Klingler and used as a jewelry store for many years. It is currently Klingler Jewelry, owned and operated by Robert Klingler.

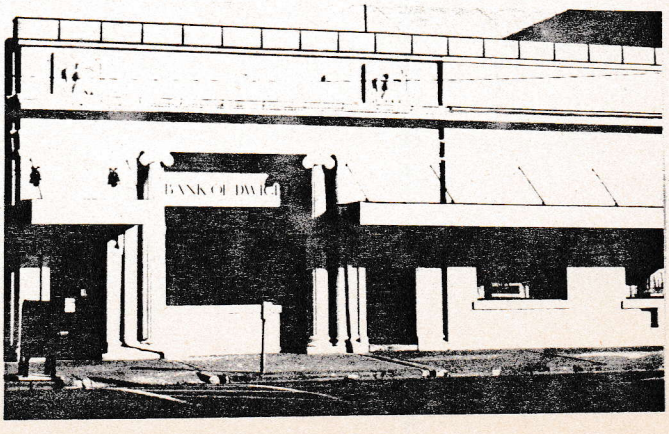
Pres.
— Nick Nelson
Howard Paulsen
Thorsen

July 9-10

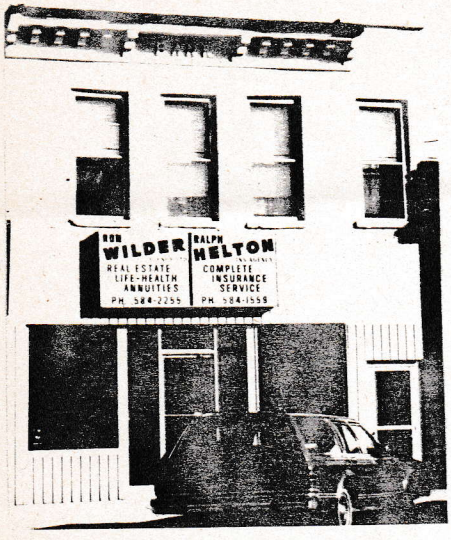
Baker Building - 144 East Main Street. In April of 1854, Isaac H. Baker, a railroad surveyor and carpenter, built a hut at this location which came to be known as the Baker Cabinet and Coffin Shop. Charles M. Baker joined the business in 1872. Roy M. Baker continued the business until James Baker took the business over in 1945. Although this business has changed in appearance over the years, it is thought to be one of the oldest businesses in Dwight to have been in the same family at the same location for 134 years.

Miller Brothers Store - 148 East Main Street. It was operated by Joe and Carl Miller as a clothing and dry goods store. It is currently Kaiser's 10c to $1.00 Store.

Bank of Dwight - 132 East Main Street. It was founded April 10, 1855 next door to the David McWilliams store. This is the 5th oldest bank in Illinois. The bank remained in the McWilliams family until 1963 when it was sold to independent investors. In 1965 control was sold to the Murphy family, the present owners. The current building was built in 1910 and remains the same except for two canopies. In 1974 the interior was expanded and remodelled into the adjoining build which was the site of the David McWilliams store, the first store built in 1855 in Dwight.

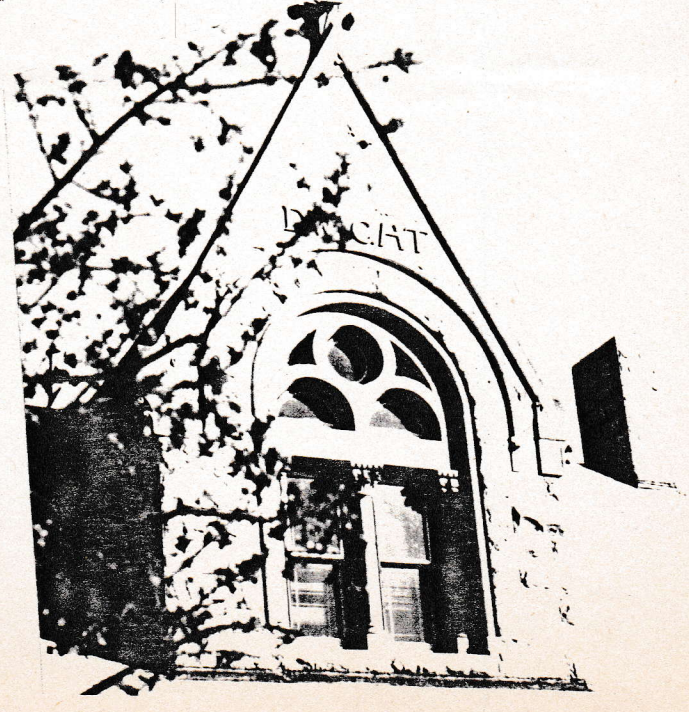


Strong Bank Building - 106 East Main Street. Built in 1873, this was the site of the Strong Bank which operated one year before going broke. It is the only building on Main Street that is mainly as it was in 1855. This building is the current offices of Ronald Wilder and associates.



Railroad Express Office - Adjacent to the Railroad Depot. This building was built about 1900 as an express office. Currently this is the home of the Dwight Chamber of Commerce.

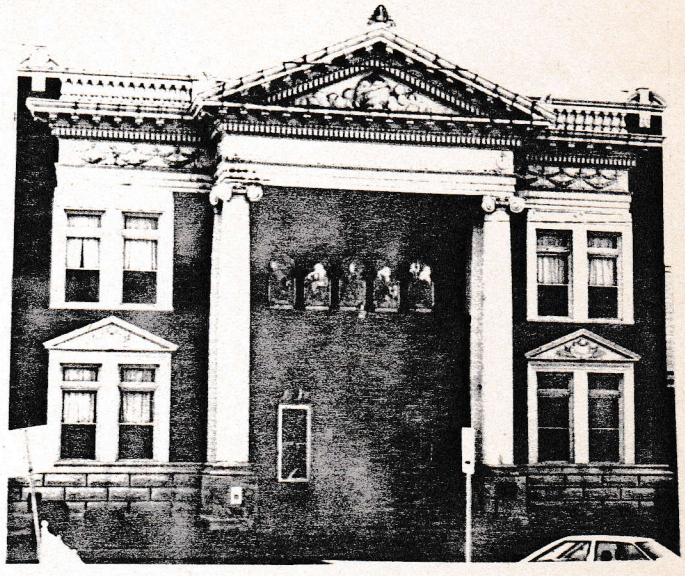
Railroad Depot - 119 West Main Street. The first depot was built on this site. The present depot was built in 1891. It was designed by Henry Ives Cobb who also designed the Chicago Post office and the Chicago Library. It was built as a tribute to Henry C. Dwight for his contribution in financing the railroad.



Judd-Block Building - 120 West Main. Built in 1898 for the Dwight Post Office. The building is currently the Dwight News Agency and the Dwight Senior Citizen Center. This building remains much the same as it did at the time of construction.

First National Bank of Dwight - 122 West Main. Built in 1905 and designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Frank L. Smith commissioned the construction of this building. The bank stock was primarily owned by Oughton, Judd, Romberger, Miller and Ludington. This building remains much the same as when constructed.

Keeley Office Building - 128 West Main Street. This building was rebuilt as it is today after a fire in 1903. The original building was completely different that the present building. In 1919 the building was leased to the Veterans Administration. The U.S. Government later bought the entire complex including the Livingston Hotel. In July 1965, the Veterans Administration closed and the State of Illinois took over the building for the W. W. Fox Children's Center.



Livingston Hotel - Corner of West Main and Mazon Avenue. At one time the hotel housed Keeley Institute patients and was later bought by the V.A. for patient rooms. It is now dining and housing for the William Fox Children's Center.

Mickelson Building - 142 East Mazon Avenue. This building was built around 1890 and is currently Olson Tire.

Conclude the walking tour by returning to the Pioneer Gothic Church.

Newell House - 120 W. Mazon Avenue. Built in 1868 to 1872 by Henry T. Newell. A tinsmith by trade and an early developer of Dwight, this house was erected as a present for his bride. A Doctor Rabe bought the house in 1886 and practiced medicine here until about 1920 when the house was purchased by Dr Dundanville. The house is currently owned and occupied by Josephine Weigman.

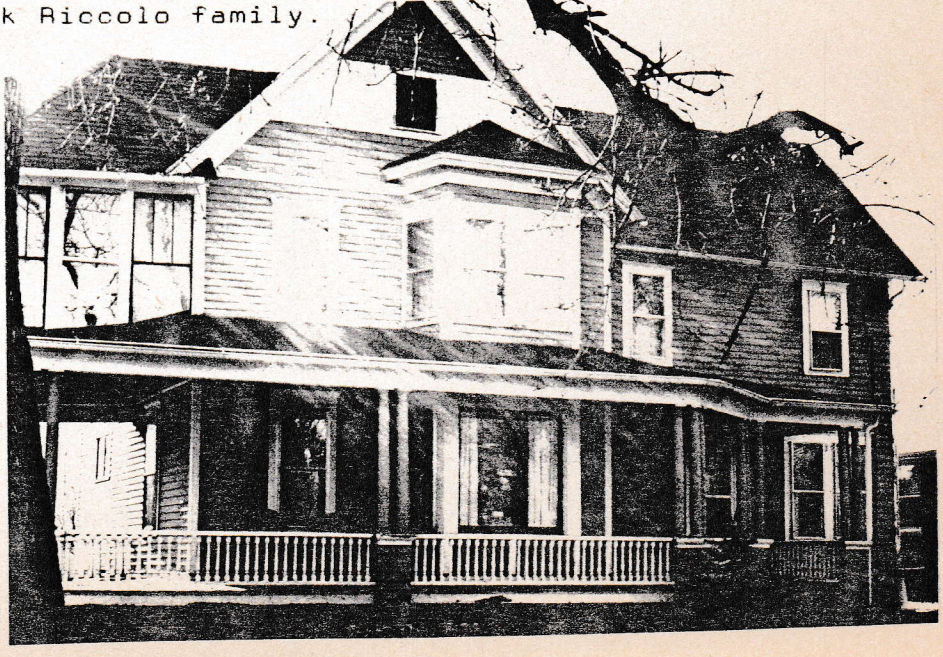
Frank L. Smith House - 123 W. Mazon Avenue. Built between 1893 and 1900. The house is currently owned by J. Alexander McWilliams, Jr., last of the McWilliams family in Dwight. The McWilliams family was one of the founding families in Dwight.

Joe Miller House - 202 West Mazon Avenue. Joe Miller was one of the Miller brothers that ran Miller Brothers Store on Main Street. Current owners and restorers are the Arnold R. Larson family.

Crandall House - 311 West Mazon Avenue. Built in 1859, this house was originally two stories high. The house was outside the original town of Dwight and remained in the Crandall Family for 118 years until it was sold to Pamela Atchison. In 1946, Clarence Wright, who married a Crandall, remodelled the house extensively to the way it is today.

Town Hall or Wright House - 314 W. Delaware Street. This house was built in 1867 by the Dwight Township as the town hall to be used for town meetings. The structure was built at a cost not to excede $500 when Dwight was incorporated. The town got half interest at the time the house was sold to Leslie E. Keeley for $132. The house was moved to its present location from the original site near the water tower. This house was also extensively remodelled by Clarence Wright. Currently, the house is owned by the Jack Beyer family.

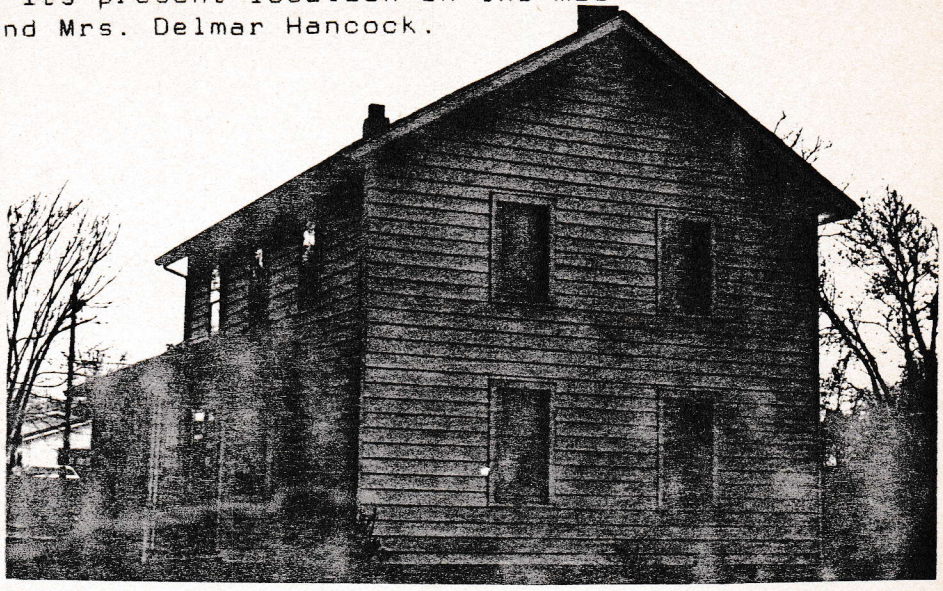
Spencer House - Corner of Columbia and James Streets. Built in late 1800's. This house was built by the man who owned and operated the Spencer Hay Press factory. This factory was built in 1885 at Washington and Williams Streets. The factory ran until 1928 and employed approximately 50 people. This was Dwight's largest industry in the 1880's. This house is currently occupied by the Frank Riccolo family.



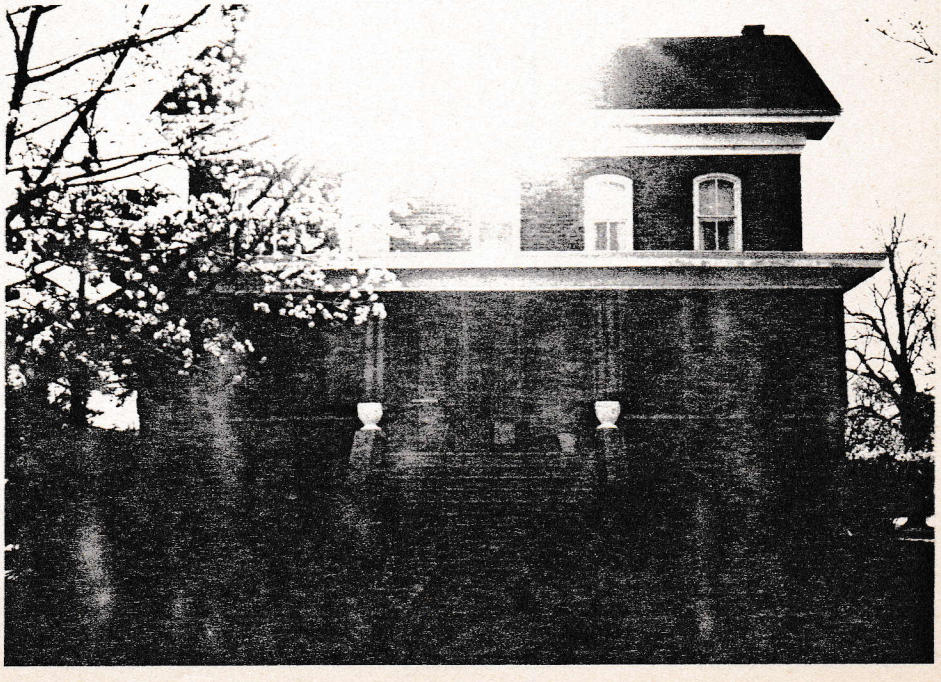
David McWilliams House - Corner of Prairie and Seminole Streets. This house was built in 1857 and has been remodelled and added to several times. Mr. Newell worked on this house as a tinsmith. David McWilliams was the owner of the first store in Dwight which was located on east Main Street. The house was mainly restored by Charles McWilliams, Jr. in the late 1940's when he married. Since leaving the McWilliams family many years ago, the house has been a single family home and an apartment. The house is now a single family home owned and occupied by the Richard Schultz family.

Edward McWilliams House - Corner of Prairie and Waupansie. This dwelling was built in 1900 for Mr. McWilliams and his 2 sisters. The house was the Baker Funeral Home for many years after World War II. James Baker made the home into 2 apartments several years ago. The carriage house behind the house is original except for the conversion to house automobiles when they became popular.

Seymour House - 115 W. Waupansie. This dwelling was the original Methodist Church in Dwight and was built in 1858. The house was originally at the site of the Edward McWilliams house and was moved to its present location in the mid 1870's. Present owners are Mr. and Mrs. Delmar Hancock.



Diffenbaugh House - Corner of Franklin and Waupansie Streets. This is the first brick house built in Dwight. The house was built in 1878 by Mr. Diffenbaugh who was a wealthy merchant in Dwight and started what is now Scott Grain Co. Mr. Diffenbaugh sold this house to Eugene Flagor in 1889. Mr. Flager owned a hardware store at 116 S. Franklin St. The house was purchased by Mrs. E. B. Lewis, Mr. Flager's daughter, in 1922 upon the death of Mr. Flager. The Lewis Family owned and occupied the residence until 1949 when it was sold. The house has changed hands several times since then and is now owned by Mrs. George Brady.



Flager House - 311 N. Franklin Street. Built by George Z. Flager, this house still has the same design as when constructed. Mr. Flager started the lumber business in Dwight and that business is now owned by George Hager. The house is now owned by Brad Wilkinson.

Site of the Spencer Hunting Lodge - The large white house in the center of Hager trailer court on East Spencer Street is the site of the lodge. The Prince of Wales visited this lodge from Great Britian in 1860. Many more details on this visit can be found in the recent book "A Prairie Village" published by Clement J. Steichen.

Other interesting sites in Dwight not covered on the tour.

Orr Building - 109 E. Chippewa. Built in 1910

Dwight Correctional Center Administration Building - Route 17 West of Dwight. Built in 1930

Trinity Lutheran Church - 3 miles north of Dwight on 47 and 3/4 miles east. Built in 1899

St. Peter's Lutheran Church - Corner of Chippewa and Lincoln Streets. Built in 1917.

First Congregational United Church of Christ - Corner of Delaware and Washington Streets. Built in 1909.

Oaklawn Cemetary - West on route 17 just past the Dwight Correctional Center. Started in 1877.

McDowell Cemetary - 1 mile west on Route 17, one mile south and 1/2 mile west. Started in 1859.

Hager Lumber Company - 103 E. Chippewa. Built 1929.

Rosendall Building - 212 E. Mazon Avenue. Built before 1926.

House at 106 W. Waupansie - Built in 1917-18 by Gus Matzen by a student of the Frank Lloyd Wright design.

House of Seven Gables - Corner of Washington and Chippewa Streets.

V.S. Wright House - Corner of Washington and Williams Streets

Jenny Thole House - 124 W. Seminole St.